

SEMINAR ON ADMINISTRATION OF THE URBAN  
FRINGE

(November 29-30, 1968)

The Urban Fringe and Our Local Government System  
by

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# The Urban Fringe and Our Local Government System

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The structure, spread and functions of the urban fringe are often studied by the geographers. Our substantive concern here is the administration of the fringe area. Since the spatial dimension of the fringe would determine the nature of its administrative problems we may be permitted to trespass into the geographers' domain. Concepts like "urban influence area" and "region" have wider connotation, the extent of the area or region being measured on the basis of certain indices. Also the delineation depends very much on the needs or purposes which the delineator has in mind. In a study of the functional zones and the urban spread of the Mysore Towns, V.L.S. Prakasa Rao has used the words "peri-urban land" and "fringe area" interchangeably.<sup>1</sup> His assumption is that the peri-urban land lies within two to three miles from the existing town boundary. Of course, he agrees that this usual spread may not be true in the case of cities passing through explosive phase of spread and where the spread is interrupted by local terrain. Although Ellefsen<sup>2</sup> uses the word 'hinter land' which has wider connotation, his conclusion is that even the hinter land of Indian cities is very much restricted as compared to Western city hinter land. When we talk of the fringe area from the standpoint of local administration we have in mind a particularly problematic area quite close to a given city boundary, which has over the years grown in such a fashion that it is for all practical purposes an integral part of the core city; yet it lies beyond the administrative

1. V.L.S. Prakasa Rao, Mysore Towns, Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, 1964.

2. Richard A. Ellefsen, 'City-Hinterland Relationships in India' in India's Urban Future, Roy Turner (ed.) University of California, 1962.

jurisdiction of the city and is administered locally by the panchayati raj bodies. So the fringe area for our purposes is a transitional or twilight zone situated in-between well-recognised land uses of the city and the agricultural tracts of the village. It is, generally speaking, smaller than the commuting or trade area of a city, and can be distinguished in terms of peculiarity of land uses. In fact, most of the land uses in the fringe area are in a flux, as a result of which industries, residential quarters, commercial places, streets, drains, shacks and slums jostle in space.

Admittedly every town or city has a fringe, narrow or wide. This is also proved by the study of Rao. As he points out, "encroachment seems inevitable whether in a small town with slow growth like Talakad or rapidly growing towns like Chikballapur, Mandya and Gadag." Not every fringe however can be considered as a problem fringe. Really speaking, the phenomenon of problem fringe is usually to be seen around growing towns and big cities. Instances are not rare where to avert the fringe problem the peripheral rural tract has been annexed by the core city thereby internalising the problem temporarily. Poona and Kanpur, and a few other municipal towns present this kind of situation. Delhi has about 300 villages within its jurisdiction, but it can be treated as a unique case where boundaries of a Union Territory coincide with those of an urban local authority. In most cases, the fringe area becomes a problem area for the core city because of its location right at the periphery of the city. This area is marked by haphazard and unregulated growth, overcrowding, slums, ribbon development and traffic problems, insanitary conditions and chaotic uses of land. The fringe area, whenever discussed, is looked at as extended city area. The unregulated and haphazard developments and the insanitary



conditions in the fringe adversely affect the core city. Free movement between the fringe and the city places the city at a disadvantage. Its services and amenities are freely used by the residents of the former without caring to pay anything to the municipal coffer. Thus, the fringe is looked at as the Mecca of the tax-dodgers. Since the restricted legal jurisdiction of the core city does not allow of municipal intervention beyond the boundary, various methods have been adopted or suggested to deal with this problem.

#### Methods Adopted

- 1) Annexation: Outright inclusion of the fringe within the city boundary is a widely known solution, and in cities like Poona, Kanpur and Howrah this method has actually been adopted.
- 2) Extra-territorial Power of Local Authority: The core city has been given in some places statutory authority to undertake planning and building regulations in the areas close to its boundary. Under the Uttar Pradesh Nagar Mahapalika Adhiniyam, 1959 the municipal corporations have been authorised to undertake these functions within two miles of the legal limits. A similar measure is the Chandigarh Periphery Control Act, 1953 under which an area within five miles on all sides of the Chandigarh boundary has been declared as "Controlled Area" where land use is decided strictly in accordance with the provisions of a periphery land use plan. A kindred measure is the Madhya Pradesh Town Periphery Control Act, 1960 under which the District Collector has power to declare an area of seven miles on all sides from the outer boundary of the town as a control area for regulating construction and development.
- 3) Notified Area Authority: To deal with the fringe areas some States have set up specially constituted local authorities. For example, under

the Bihar and Orissa Municipal Act, 1922, notified area committees have been set-up in Jamshedpur and Jugsalai (Bihar). These committees consist of State Government nominees and function as de facto municipal bodies. Similarly, in West Bengal the Bengal Municipal Act, 1932 provides for the establishment of identical notified area authorities for administering the following areas:

- (a) any area not fulfilling the conditions for being constituted as a municipality,
- (b) any area which falls within a newly developing town, or
- (c) any area in which new industries have been or are being established.

In West Bengal, a notified area authority has been set-up at Kalyani within the Calcutta Metropolitan District.

4) Special Controlling Authority: Another measure of special nature is the Uttar Pradesh Regulation of Building Operations Act, 1958 under which the State Government can constitute a Controlling Authority for a regulated area with a view to prevention in that area of bad laying out of land, haphazard erection of buildings or growth of sub-standard colonies, or to develop and expand the area according to proper plan. The authority is to consist of not more than nine members with the Secretary, Local Self Government Department or the Divisional Commissioner or any other officer not below the rank of a Sub-Divisional Magistrate as Chairman.

Other members to be nominated by the State Government may be the Chairman of Zila Parishad and the President of the Municipality or Notified area situated within the regulated area. There is also provision for co-option of other presidents of local bodies in case these fall within the regulated area. In West Bengal, the Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Area

(Use and Development of Land) Controls Act, 1965 is intended to serve the same purpose. Under Section 3 of the Act, the State Government may declare an area to be a controlled area for which it may issue directions concerning the use of land, the division of any site into areas for the erection of buildings, the allotment or reservation of land for services or utilities, excavation, access to roads, and any other matters necessary for orderly development. The State Government may appoint a Land Use Controller to enforce these directions, or delegate powers to existing agencies such as District Officers or the Chief Executive Officers of local authorities.

Apart from these, there are also few instances of joint committees of urban and rural local bodies to solve specific problems.

#### Methods Suggested

In recent times at least two high-power central committees have paid attention to this problem of unregulated and haphazard urban growth beyond the municipal boundary. One is the Committee on Urban Land Policy which submitted its report in 1965, and the other is the Rural-Urban Relationship Committee which submitted its report a year after. The first Committee suggested<sup>3</sup> that a way out of the type of difficulties created by a fringe area might be to create a high-power statutory autonomous urban development board or authority at the state level which will have the power of compulsory public acquisition of land. In its opinion, the board should have a whole-time Chairman, and two or three whole-time members to deal with financial, engineering and administrative matters. Senior officers of the concerned State departments including the Local Self Government Department, State Town Planning Department and the State Public Works Department, and one or two members of Parliament,

3. Report of the Committee on Urban Land Policy, Ministry of Health, Government of India, 1965, pp. 29, 52-54.

State Legislatures or local authorities should be taken in as members of the board. The principal executive head of this board should be vested with sufficient financial and executive powers. As regards functions, it is suggested that the board would guide and advice the State Government, the urban local bodies and other agencies in matters pertaining to urbanisation and urban planning and development. It will act as the co-ordinating agency for planning and development and enforce the plans prepared by it with a view to secure integrated and co-ordinated planning and development. The board may also undertake the implementation of various development schemes itself. It might have to set up operating units in the areas where it has to work. To ensure inter-agency collaboration and coordination at the local level the board may have a local Advisory Committee in the operating areas consisting of representatives of the urban local bodies, development agencies and other major interests. Where no operating units can be set-up, the board may entrust the urban development functions to a suitable local agency, such as the Improvement Trust or any other authority. Thus, the Committee on Urban Land Policy recommends a multi-functional board at the State level which may or may not have local operating units of its own. Planning and development of fringe areas would be one of its functions, but it is not exclusively meant to take care of these areas.

The Rural-Urban Relationship Committee, as the title suggests, is more intimately concerned with the governmental problems beyond municipal boundaries. This Committee has discussed in details the problems of unregulated urbanisation. To quote from its Report, "The urban process cannot stop at the edge of the municipal limits. In fact, most of the problems of urbanisation relate to haphazard growth and development in areas that lie within the administrative jurisdiction of Panchayati Raj



Bodies." The solution offered by this Committee is quite ingenious.<sup>4</sup> Except for metropolitan and industrial complexes, the district, in its opinion, must be accepted as the regional administrative unit for the purposes of planning and development within the framework of a comprehensive planning legislation. The districts have been divided into two broad categories: (a) those with substantial urban population, and (b) others which are predominantly rural. For the district with substantial urban population a statutory planning and development authority at the district level has been suggested. The members of this authority would include the District Magistrate, the President or Chairman or Mayor of major cantonment board, municipalities and corporations within the district, the Chairman and two other members of the Zila Parishad of the district and representatives of special interests like railways etc. For the predominantly rural district no statutory authority has been recommended. Instead, a special committee has been suggested consisting of representatives of urban and rural local bodies and other special interests within the district. The Chairman of the involved Zila Parishad will preside over this committee.

For metropolitan areas and industrial complexes a separate planning and development authority has been recommended. The State Minister of Local Self Government or Urban Development should be the Chairman of the authority, which would consist of the representatives of zila parishads, major municipal authorities and other important interests within the metropolitan area. The authority, it is suggested, should have a senior officer as its executive head who would be assisted by technical members in charge of planning, engineering and finance. So far as the special

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4. Report of the Rural-Urban Relationship Committee (Vol.I), Ministry of Health and Family Planning, Government of India, 1966, pp.43-44, 52-53.

Committee for the predominantly rural district is concerned, it is to be assisted by the State Government in drawing up regional plans and their implementation. But in the two other cases, the special statutory planning and development authorities should have sufficient powers and resources to prepare regional plans and ensure their implementation, to co-ordinate the activities of different agencies, and to operate in respect of land acquisition, development and disposal and other important area wide functions. Wherever possible, the urban and rural local bodies would prepare detailed local plans in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the statutory planning and development authority. For metropolitan areas the creation of a single municipal government covering the entire region has also been recommended as an alternative.

Recently, in the Basic Development Plan<sup>5</sup> for the Calcutta Metropolitan District prepared by the Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organisation of the Government of West Bengal another recommendation has been made that special development authorities should be set up to undertake planned development of both municipal and non-municipal areas falling within the Metropolitan District. The latter constitute about sixty per cent of the total area of the Metropolitan District and contain nearly fifteen per cent of its population. Three such authorities recommended are the East Bank Development Authority, the West Bank Development Authority and the Kalyani-Bansberia Development Authority. The first two would replace the existing two Improvement Trusts of Calcutta and Howrah. Essentially these authorities would be in the nature of Improvement Trusts and their main functions would be to undertake urban renewal, area development, new township development and local planning within the framework of a metropolitan plan.<sup>5</sup>

5. Basic Development Plan for the Calcutta Metropolitan District (1965-86), Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organisation, Government of West Bengal, 1966, pp.127-128.



### The Problem Reconsidered

The methods so far adopted and suggested to contain and regulate fringe growth point out that this problem has not gone unnoticed. Before examining them, some basic considerations need to be kept in mind. In the first place, one cannot overlook the fact that our local government which has to bear the brunt of urbanisation is ill-equipped to undertake this responsibility. Although the urban local bodies are somewhat better off, many of these have within their boundaries haphazard and unplanned developments, and even the basic urban services such as water supply, drainage and sewerage, roads and medical and health facilities are awfully poor in many of them. Often there would be hardly any marked difference between the situation within the municipal boundary and that outside it. Again, the riparian rural local body - a tiny gram panchayat - does not have the resources or the necessary orientation to deal with urban problems. The panchayati raj bodies, as they are conceived and constituted now, are basically oriented toward rural development and agricultural growth, and cannot be expected to provide an answer to urbanisation and urban development. A second important consideration concerns the degree of control that needs to be planned to cope with haphazard fringe growth. Although the fringe areas are notorious for unregulated urbanisation which is obviously annoying to a townplanner and it is always nice to have an urban area according to a master plan, a developing country like ours with sluggish rate of economic growth can hardly afford to disregard the fact that the fringe areas are also the natural growth areas. Land use controls should therefore be carefully planned to impose 'minimal essential constraints' which would help, and not scare away, 'aggressive

private investment in productive activity!<sup>6</sup> Last, but not least, whatever methods might be adopted or suggested to tackle the problems of fringe area, one has got to take the local bodies of the area in confidence and from the long term point of view no enduring solution is possible outside the system of local government.

Turning to the methods that have been adopted and suggested from time to time, it appears that these are classifiable into three types:

- (a) solution being within the system of local government
- (b) solution being outside the system of local government and in special purpose bodies, and
- (c) solution being in a compromise between (a) and (b).

Municipal annexation of peripheral tracts, extra-territorial powers over the fringe areas, and joint committees belong to the first type of solution: while notified area authority, special controlling authority and the Basic Development Plan's suggested development authorities belong to the second. The methods recommended by the Committee on Urban Land Policy and the Rural-Urban Relationship Committee fall in the last category. Annexation, exercise of extra-territorial powers and joint committees serve the purpose of internalising the fringe problems. These may be useful methods in limited cases, but their acceptance as a general policy is open to question. Municipal bodies in India live a hand-to-mouth existence. It will, therefore, be ruinous for them to undertake additional responsibilities for the undeveloped problem - fringe. Also the residents of the fringe are often opposed to annexation for fear of increased taxation. Again, fringe growth is a

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6. In this respect the Basic Development Plan for the Calcutta Metropolitan District has laid down a reasonably cautious urban land policy, op.cit., p.134.

moving phenomenon which needs to be dealt with by a sufficiently flexible tool. These methods are, however, too static to be of any real use in a dynamic situation. This applies equally well to the special purpose bodies which are also area-bound. Even then, given adequate resources, these bodies might be useful as stop-gap devices. The Improvement Trusts, for example, have in many places done commendable work as development agencies; once the development work is completed, the Trust usually hands over maintenance responsibilities to the municipal authority. At the same time, special authorities often get involved in jurisdictional conflicts with the local bodies, and they have to depend on the State Government for funds.

Of the suggested measures of the two official Committees mentioned earlier, the idea of a State level urban development board seems to have attracted little attention. Apart from the difficulty of finding resources for such a machinery, an important problem that this kind of proposal raises is: where to place it in the organisational set-up of State Government? Rural local government and urban local government are in many States looked after by separate departments. An urban development board would naturally be tagged to the State department dealing with urban local bodies, but urban growth often cuts across the boundaries of local bodies, both urban and rural. Unless there is a single State level department of local government in charge of urban and rural local bodies, it may not be easy for a functional agency like the proposed board to operate in the peri-urban areas. Also, the location of a State functional agency would perhaps be fruitful at the field level and not at the State level.

The Rural-Urban Relationship Committee

In many respects the recommendations of the Rural-Urban Relationship Committee are of monumental significance. It deserves all the praise for pioneering a sound and scientific approach to the problems of urbanisation and urban development without being bogged down in petty institutional considerations. Urbanisation, as the Committee rightly points out, is no respecter of local boundaries; it is a mobile phenomenon which links in its trail rural and urban areas together. One can infer from this that whatever happens in the fringe area is the localised symptom of a bigger problem whose tap roots lie elsewhere. To get a broader perspective it is, therefore, necessary to look beyond local areas into the wider region that grows out of a symbiotic relationship of the rural and urban areas. To quote from the Committee's Report:

"The process of interaction and inter-dependence between the smaller communities for the achievement of common needs and interests leads to the formation of a regional community. Such a regional community contains a central urban area and the surrounding rural areas. The boundaries of such a region would depend on the size and the complexity of the urban area. The bigger and more complex an urban area, the larger the corresponding region embracing within its boundaries rural and urban groups. All these regions, large and small, include a fairly broad spectrum of agricultural, industrial, commercial and other types of activities, all closely inter-related and requiring various common services such as health, education, water supply, drainage and transportation. In the region, there is a hierarchical pattern of settlements bound together in a system of functionally interlinked and inter-dependent units.



There is thus a continuum of communities that stretches from the smallest village to the largest metropolis". Ideally, the problem area should be coterminous with the administrative area. If the unit of rural-urban interactions is the region, it is but natural to recommend a regional administrative machinery. This is exactly what the Rural-Urban Relationship Committee has done. The upshot of the Committee's recommendation is that barring the metropolitan areas and the city region complexes having a population of more than 5 lakhs which have to be treated differently, the district should everywhere be accepted, for the sake of administrative convenience, as the regional unit for planning and development. Virtually a two-tier administrative system is envisaged with a district level special statutory planning and development authority looking after major area-wide functions and the local authorities at the bottom undertaking purely local functions.

This recommended administrative structure would eliminate chances of unregulated fringe growth, as the upper-tier authority will plan for the whole region including the peri-urban areas falling within it. Presumably, inter-regional plan coordination would be done at the State level. But once this problem of State level coordination is posed the basic weakness of the recommendation of the Rural-Urban Relationship Committee becomes apparent. If Panchayati Raj and Municipal Government are looked after at the State level by two separate departments which is the case in many States after the advent of Panchayati Raj, the idea of coordinated rural-urban development <sup>at</sup> the regional level as envisaged by the Committee becomes difficult, if not impossible. Local government is one and indivisible, and it has to be treated as such. Any dichotomous approach at the policy level is bound to affect administration at the

local and regional levels. The device of a statutory planning and development authority at the district level is a purely ad hoc arrangement and it cannot organically link the rural and urban local bodies together. Even now, provision for interlocking memberships between the panchayati raj bodies and the municipal authorities exist in most of the Panchayati Raj Acts. The Andhra Pradesh Municipalities Act, 1965 provides that a municipality must send its plan schemes to the zila parishad (Sec.34(4)). But, all these arrangements have failed to achieve the much needed coordination between urban and rural local bodies. Intergovernmental coordination is more desired than actually realised in practice, and it is hard to believe that the statutory planning and development authority with an assortment of diverse interests would have a smooth sailing.

Nevertheless, the Committee's diagnosis of the administrative malady is certainly above board and its approach to administrative reorganisation is remarkably sound. To quote from its Report:<sup>8</sup>

"The vital role of administrative institutions in equalising distinctions and differences must be recognised.....and so long as we have one set of institutions for urban areas and another set for the rural areas, the differences will not only persist but get further stratified."

There cannot be a better statement of the predicament of contemporary local government administration in India. The phenomenon of unregulated fringe is largely a concomitant of the dichotomy that exists today between urban and rural local government institutions in the country. The urban fringe is the vanishing point of local government, as it were, where municipal administration cannot reach and rural administration is at best a silent spectator. What is needed is, to borrow the Committee's words, "the integration and coordination of the activities of the urban and rural local bodies, particularly in the field of planning and



development."<sup>9</sup> After this, the Committee's recommendation about the statutory authority sounds inconsistent with its own approach toward the solution pattern. If integration is really the objective, this cannot be achieved through ad hoc arrangement. It has to be built into the very system of local government much in the same way as the administrative county and its constituent county districts are linked together in the English system of local government. Actually, the structure recommended by the Committee comes very close to an integrated system. It needs another bold step forward to replace its district level statutory authority by an elective upper-tier government which would have under a single local government Act the municipal bodies and suitably designed rural units as its bottom-tier authorities. The bigger municipal corporations would perhaps have to be left out of this scheme. Such an arrangement must be preceded by the creation of a single ministry/department of local government at the State level which would do away with the present dichotomous attitude toward local problems.

The fringe being the rural-urban confluence, a discussion on its administration naturally raises fundamental questions about the conception of local government as a whole. During the nineteenth century our Municipal Government grew up as an exclusive system in much the same way as Panchayati Raj was inaugurated as an exclusive pattern of rural local government ten years ago. An unhappy contradiction that has resulted from this is that industrial and technological developments are fast creating a functionally linked society, but the two mutually exclusive systems of local government are trying to keep local communities apart. Sooner or later, we will have to resolve this contradiction by evolving a composite system of local government that would fit in with the emerging pattern of society.

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ADMINISTRATION OF THE URBAN FRINGE  
(November 29-30, 1968 )

Financing Development of the Urban Fringe  
by

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The urban fringe lies in the twilight zone between rural and urban areas, having strong linkages with the latter and an unstable land-use. Most observers of Indian urbanisation would define the urban fringe as lying within 2-3 miles outside a municipal jurisdiction in the form of a belt. A proper approach would be to relate the fringe to the adjoining urban area and then introduce the municipal boundary to differentiate between: (a) internal fringe, and (b) external fringe, in relation to either the rural or the urban local authority concerned with the administration of the area. In this paper, we would examine the problems of the urban fringe from the point of view of municipal fiscal policy and see to what extent alternative arrangements could be made for resolving the conflicting interests involved in the development of these areas.

#### Fiscal Problems

External fringe: Consider a fringe with industries and another fringe with slums outside the municipal limits. In the case of the industrial fringe, it would be advantageous for the municipality to annex the area within its limits as long as the extra tax revenue covers the marginal cost of extending its services. This can be done even without formal annexation, by sharing the revenue surplus with the adjoining rural panchayat. In the process, the municipality might derive the advantages of scalar economy or utilisation of excess capacity in any existing service. However, if the advantages of exclusive development, along with reduction in taxes, are more to the industries in the fringe, there would be resistance to either territorial or functional annexation with the municipality. The industries might, in fact, choose to operate all



the civic services for themselves and also to an extent allow others to enjoy these. This seems to be the case with company townships adjoining municipal jurisdictions.

In case of the slum-fringe outside the municipal limits, however, there would be not only constant pressure to extend municipal facilities, but also, there would be considerable leakage of municipal services through the day-time influx of workers in the municipal area. It would not be practicable to extend municipal services to the slum-fringe, because of inadequate revenue base, and it is also difficult to adequately tax the floating population commuting from the fringe. The only economy that can arise would relate to large-scale of operation of various municipal services and proper utilisation of any excess capacity that might exist. It would, therefore, be not in the interest of the municipality to take care of the slum-fringe, unless the revenue losses are compensated by the State government through corresponding grants.

Internal fringe: Suppose, now, that a municipal area is burdened with a fringe having inadequate revenue base to support municipal services.

What are the choices open to the municipality to deal with the situation?

Firstly, the municipality, like a monopolist, may adopt product differentiation or differential pricing with respect to various services. In

other words, this would mean providing the same quality of service to the under-developed fringe at the cost of the developed areas. The second

alternative would be to charge a lower rate of tax and finance a lower level of municipal services to the fringe areas. The first alternative

has been tried in Delhi since the creation of municipal corporation in 1958 (with a nominal fixed grant from the Central government), while the

second alternative has been adopted in Bombay with separate sub-budgets

for the suburbs and the extended suburbs. On the other hand, Calcutta has



so far resisted the pressure of including its fringe within its jurisdiction - except in the case of Tollygunge suburb which is being developed by the city in stages. Where a fringe assumes the characteristics of a balanced development with a sub-centre of activity and a mixture of industrial and residential use - as in a suburb - the adjustments after annexation with the city are less painful. In the interim period, through zoning and planned development, the fringe has to be converted into a viable area. In other words, the slum-fringe has to give way to a residential-cum-industrial suburb.

#### Fiscal Solutions

Short-term solutions: The problem of the urban fringe, therefore, is essentially, a transitional problem which has to be faced without imposing undue burden on the city residents or driving the slum-dwellers to the wolves. If we rule out any extensive spatial redistribution within the municipality because (a) it is not a function of local government to attempt income redistribution, and (b) benefit taxation is more appropriate in local services - then, the transitional problem can be overcome through external subsidy or a separate budget or a combination of the two.

Long-term solutions: In the long run, however, it is the duty of the municipality to create conditions for the development of its fringe. However, when the fringe is located outside its jurisdiction, the municipality may be permitted to plan and develop the area in accordance with a well thought-out land-use plan. Here, it is possible to conceive of a joint development board with the rural panchayat, or entrusting the fringe development to an ad hoc authority created by the State government. However, if the municipality is to be entrusted with the fringe at a later stage, it seems unavoidable to associate it both spiritually and financially with the development process. If the State government undertakes

fringe development, it would mean diverting resources from other areas of the State to the fringe. Moreover, at the time of annexing the developed fringe with the city, the adjoining municipality may plead inability to maintain the facilities created. The better course seems to be to empower the municipality to regulate and plan for its fringe, and to annex it with the city when the area assumes viable characteristics. After annexation, the municipality will have to develop the area fully and raise the level of services to city standards. Till the area fully develops, the State government will have to subsidise the civic services in the area, and the municipality will maintain separate accounts for the annexed territory. The quantum of State aid would, of course, depend on the time period envisaged for the development of the internal fringe.

#### A Plea for Realism

In the light of the foregoing analysis, it is obvious that a responsible approach to fringe development would eschew the desire to milk the municipal authority or the State government more than is justified on purely economic ground. In order to assess the relative advantages and obligations of alternative arrangements, proper cost-revenue studies could be commissioned. It is necessary to ensure that such studies do not serve narrow and special interests. At the same time, the methodology and conceptual framework of these studies must be sound enough to reveal the costs and benefits of fringe development to the community as a whole and apportion, as far as possible, the fiscal responsibility to the concerned government - local and State - accordingly.<sup>1</sup> Without the benefit of these studies on specific situations, it is unrealistic to advance view-points based either on humanitarian considerations or self-interest.

1. For a critical evaluation of a few existing studies see William L.C. Wheaton, "Applications of Cost-Revenue Studies to Fringe Areas", Journal of the American Institute of Planners, November, 1959.

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"Administration of the Urban Fringe"  
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URBAN FRINGE AND CITY PLANNING

by

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1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered. This involves understanding the context and the specific requirements of the task.

1. *Staphylococcus aureus* (100%)

1. *Chlorophyll a* and *Chlorophyll b* were determined by the method of Arar and Collins (1971).

## URBAN FRINGE AND CITY PLANNING

by

R.S. Gupta

City Planning to be rational, realistic and sound, cannot confine its surveys or plan making to the area within the arbitrary and quite often illogical municipal limits. It must also look far beyond these limits for forces and trends which condition, if not largely control, the city's future, for aside from the obvious intimate relationship which exists between the central city and its suburbs or fringe areas there also exist the complex metropolitan regions. Besides, prospects and conditions in the city are also affected by regional, state and central forces, policies and programmes. The planning process consisting in the main of coördination and integration, of achieving a higher degree of harmony and organic unity among all features of development which compose the neighbourhood and fringe areas cannot thus stop at the city limits. The plans of the city must be integrated with those of the adjoining suburban or fringe areas in the districts and even those of the region and the nation itself.

There are other and perhaps more compelling reasons why the city planning agency should look beyond the city limits for the preparation of the master plan. Some of the forces and factors which condition and even control the future of the city — its growth, its economic prospects, even some of its physical features — are of regional character. What is likely to happen in the city will depend not alone on what is likely to happen in the larger urban metropolitan area of which city is only a part, but also on what is likely to happen in the fringe areas and the entire region. Rational plans for the desirable future development of the city cannot be drawn without adequate consideration of the fringe areas and regional



and state forces and policies.

Cities, thus, cannot be well planned in isolation of their hinter-land or fringe areas. The area of influence of metropolitan cities extend over a wide area. They, in turn, rely on the region for many of their daily needs and there is constant inter-action between the mother city and the surrounding towns and fringe areas.

#### Earlier Attempts at City Planning -

The earliest attempts at city development plans came in this country by constituting the Improvement Trusts which were set up under the special enactments. Bombay was the first city to have an Improvement Trust in 1898, followed by Calcutta in 1911, U.P. in 1919, and subsequently by other States. The composition of these Improvement Trusts varied according to their Acts, but they performed similar functions, viz., the preparation and execution of individual schemes for improvement and expansion of the city, without generally any conception of the overall plan and development requirements of the city in the regional context. They had no powers to prepare master plans and control land use. The powers and functions of the Improvement Trusts were, thus, limited to certain schemes of development. These short-comings of Improvement Trusts became apparent with the rise in the growth of population and rapid urbanisation. This resulted in unchecked speculation in land prices and large scale building activity on the fringe areas. Although the Improvement Trusts' jurisdiction was not confined to the city limits and could be extended to include the peripheral areas, yet they had no power to regulate and control land use.

In view of the limited powers of Improvement Trusts, separate Town Planning Acts were enacted by the State Governments. (A list of such



Acts is given in the Appendix). The Bombay Town Planning Act, which was radically revised in 1954, entrusts the planning and development functions to the urban local bodies within their respective municipal limits.

The Madras Act empowers the local authorities to prepare town planning schemes in respect of lands within their limits and in the vicinity. In Uttar Pradesh, the Nagar Mahapalika Adhiniyam, 1959, makes the municipal corporations directly responsible for planning and development functions and dissolves the Improvement Trusts. Contrary to the Bombay Act, where a local authority has no power to prepare and enforce a plan outside the city limits, the U.P. Act empowers the municipal corporations to plan for and enforce in an area beyond two miles of their limits.

Some State Governments have also resorted to legislation for the limited purpose of controlling land uses which are not, strictly speaking, planning enactments but only methods of negative control without any regular machinery. The Bihar Restriction of Uses of Land Act, the U.P. Regulation of Building Operations, and the Madhya Pradesh Town Periphery Control Act are examples of such legislations. The Madhya Pradesh Act empowers the Collector of a District to declare an area of 7 miles from the boundary of the town, on all sides, as controlled area for regulating construction and development. The Capital Project Administration for Chandigarh and the Calcutta Metropolitan Area (Use and Development of Land) Control Act, 1965, fall in the same category.

From the above it is clear that this tinkering is no substitute for proper town planning legislation in the country. The concept of planning, as envisaged in the various Acts is narrow and limited and the statutory provisions for extending jurisdiction to a mile or two beyond the city limits are absolutely inadequate for the purpose of planning in

the broad metropolitan regional context. It must be recognised that the boundaries of urban local bodies should take into account the growing needs of urban spatial development and the socio-economic inter-dependence of the city and the surrounding fringe areas.

The Five Year Plans and City Planning -

The first and second Five Year Plans of the country did not pay any attention to the urban local bodies, and it was only in the third Five Year Plan that definite proposals for a coordinated urban development were made. The third Plan envisaged a regional approach<sup>1</sup> to problems of urbanisation and industrialisation, and made provision for the preparation of city and regional plans which should prescribe the broad pattern of land use and zoning in order to regulate and control the future development. Recognising that urban areas had not been actively associated with the first two Five Year Plans, the third Five Year Plan laid down, "that in the next phase of planning as many towns and cities as possible, at any rate those with a population of one lakh or more, should come into the scheme of planning in an organic way, each city mobilising its own resources and helping to create conditions for a better life for its citizens."

In August 1962, the Planning Commission had written<sup>2</sup> to the State Governments about the urgent need to draw the urban areas and urban communities into the scheme of national planning in an organic manner and suggested that to begin with, metropolitan cities, State capitals, and cities with municipal corporations might be invited to prepare city development plans. The Planning Commission rightly desired the city

1. For details, see the Third Five Year Plan, Planning Commission, Government of India, 1961, pp.147-153.

2. vide: Letter No.HOU/6(6)/62, dated New Delhi, August 17, 1962.

development plans to be linked up with the State Five Year Plans so that items of urban development could be incorporated into the State Plans and form their integral parts for all purposes. The State Local Self-Government Departments, the Planning Commission desired, should hold consultations with the State Planning and Finance Departments to incorporate the city plans in the respective State Plans and ensure allocation of funds to provide loans, grants and other assistance which would be necessary from the State and Central Governments for the implementation of the approved city development plans. Unfortunately, no progress was made in this direction, primarily because of lack of knowledge of and experience in the preparation of such plans among the urban local bodies. Even in those places where the plans were drawn up, they remained paper plans in the absence of a proper machinery for their coordination and implementation.

It may be realised that in order to create growth centres in the regional frame-work, as has been envisaged in the policy directions of the Third Five Year Plan, proper attention has to be paid to these matters by the State governments. Implementation of such a policy requires careful surveys and regional planning in the light of resources available and potentialities for future development. This has to be done at the State level by the Town and Country Planning Organisation, which has to identify points of potential urban growth and draw up broad plans of land use, industrial location and communications in consultation with the State Departments of Industries, Power, Irrigation, Public Works, Technical Education, Transport, Public Health, etc. Surveys and planning of growing rural-urban industrial complexes to relieve pressure on the principal urban centres and to determine location of satellite towns will have to be made. Broad planning of such regions as the Calcutta - Burdwan - Asansol industrial belt in West Bengal, Ahmedabad - Baroda region in Gujarat,

Bombay-Poona complex in Maharashtra, or the National Capital Region of Delhi can be carried out only at the State level, and master plans of towns, cities and city regions falling within the area of the overall regional plan have to conform to such a plan.

#### Problems of Regional Planning -

Most of the metropolitan regions fall within the jurisdiction of one State, but since there is more than one local authority in the area, the plan preparation and its implementation becomes a difficult task. In the case of those regions where more than one State Government is involved the problem becomes all the more difficult. One such example is of the National Capital Region, which not only extends over the Union Territory of Delhi but also takes about five districts of the adjoining States of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan. Here the task becomes all the more complicated due to the necessity of constant coordination between the local bodies, the State Governments and the Central Government. The Bombay Municipal Corporation, for example, having jurisdiction over the whole of the metropolitan region had a much better framework than Delhi. Similarly, the Calcutta Metropolitan District, unlike Bombay, is not a single coherent unit of administration. It covers an area of 400 square-miles with three municipal corporations, 32 municipalities, one cantonment, one notified area authority and 36 non-municipal urban areas.

But these problems are not peculiar to India alone. Even other countries of the world have faced such situations and have successfully solved them. These difficulties can be overcome either by (i) amalgamating all the local authorities into one and, thus, creating a big corporation like the Municipal Corporation for Greater Bombay; or (ii) by creating a federation of all local authorities in the region, the upper tier dealing with area-wide functions while the lower tier is left to look



after purely local functions, like Toronto or Tokyo; or (iii) by creating special purpose authorities for specific functions. Delhi and Calcutta have adopted the last alternative. The Delhi Development Authority, for example, has jurisdiction over the entire Union Territory of Delhi but, unfortunately, it does not solve the problem as the National Capital Region covers an area of 70 miles in radius from Delhi, which includes areas from the three adjoining States of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan. The Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organisation does not face such a situation as the entire regional planning area belongs to the State of West Bengal.

Since the population of urban areas is growing very fast and ribbon development beyond the municipal boundaries is common experience of all growing cities, it is not necessary that the solution which is found good to-day may be good after a decade or so in the context of regional planning. Thus, the State Government of Maharashtra has found that even the area of the Corporation of Greater Bombay, which once was considered adequate for metropolitan regional planning, is not extensive enough to deal with the problem to-day. "After appropriate amendments to the town planning law, a Metropolitan Regional Planning Board has come into existence with only the power of planning." There is also a proposal for a metropolitan and regional water supply organisation under the direct control of the State Government."<sup>3</sup>

#### The Foreign Experiences -

As seen earlier a metropolitan region has more than one local authority in the area and proper planning cannot be done without taking the whole region into account. In such cases there is need for a single

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3. Gian Prakash, "Organizing City Government", Indian Journal of Public Administration, Vol. XIV, No. 3, July-September, 1968, p. 511.



high-powered agency which should be made responsible for planning and development and performance of area-wide functions, like water supply, sewerage and drainage facilities, trunk roads, etc. It is worthwhile, to describe briefly as to how some of the metropolitan areas in the Western countries have solved such problems.

Metropolitan Toronto: The City of Toronto, which is the capital of the Ontario Province in Canada, grew into a big metropolitan area during the period 1912 to 1952 A.D. In this area there were 13 municipal governments and their boundaries were purely artificial. None of the local governments was concerned about how the metropolitan services, which were essential for the development of the whole area, could be provided.

In 1951, the city of Toronto applied to the Ontario Municipal Board for the amalgamation of all the 13 municipalities into one, but despite their dire necessity for services which they could not provide themselves, eleven out of the twelve suburban municipalities defended their right to remain autonomous. Hence, the proposal for amalgamation was rejected. But realising that something had to be done to solve the problems facing the area, the Ontario Municipal Board recommended the formation of a new level of metropolitan government charged with the responsibility of those services which were metropolitan in character, leaving purely local functions to the local authorities in the area.

In April 1953, the Metropolitan Toronto Act was passed, according to which the metropolitan council consisted of 12 mayors of the suburban municipalities and 12 members from the city of Toronto, and the twenty-fifth member, who was the Chairman of the council was appointed by the Lieutenant Governor of the Province. This metropolitan council has been

made responsible for the over-all planning of the area, including supervision of local planning and zoning in the thirteen municipalities of the area.<sup>4</sup> The jurisdiction of the metropolitan council covers an area of 245 square miles.

Metropolitan Tokyo: Tokyo is, perhaps, the largest city in the world to-day with a population of about 10 million, covering an area of approximately 1600 square miles. The metropolitan Tokyo was created by consolidating the city of Tokyo with Tokyo Prefecture in 1943 during the Second World War. Besides the city of Tokyo, the metropolitan area has 10 cities, 22 towns and 10 villages in its fold. The metropolitan assembly consists of 120 members, who are elected for a term of 4 years by the citizens directly on the basis of wards. The lower tier local bodies provide the ordinary services to their inhabitants while the metropolitan assembly deals with area-wide functions including metropolitan planning.

Metropolitan London: Metropolitan London had a two tier government since last about 60 years. The London County Council had 28 boroughs covering an area of about 117 square miles. But since London had expanded far beyond this area, the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London (1957-60), suggested to include 118 local authorities extending over an area of 620 square miles. Thus, under the Act of 1963, the newly constituted Greater London Council has 32 boroughs and "can look with a single eye at the entire metropolis in regard to such essential services as strategic planning, main highways and traffic regulation, housing and overspill, fire services and refuse disposal, sewage and the ambulance service."<sup>5</sup>

4. For details, see W.W. Crouch, "Metropolitan Government in Toronto," Public Administration Review, Spring 1954, pp.85-95.

5. W.A. Robson, Local Government in Crisis, Allen & Unwin, 1966, p.142.

Many such examples of metropolitan areas can be cited where the area-wide problems have been solved through the means of a metropolitan council. In brief, a metropolitan council acts as a "voluntary association of governments designed to provide an area-wide mechanism for key officials to study, discuss and determine the means - cooperative means, if possible - of solving common problems."<sup>6</sup>

#### Conclusions -

From the above account it is clear that the solution for large urban centres is a two-tier system, thus bringing together the existing units of local governments under a common high-powered metropolitan council or a federation of local authorities with area-wide function which, otherwise, remain unattended, like city and regional planning and their enforcement, development of water-supply and sewage disposal, electricity, trunk roads, etc. Even the Rural-Urban Relationship Committee had gone into the question of urban planning and regional development and suggested that: "In metropolitan areas.....the planning and development authority should be representative of the different interests in the area and it should be nominated by the State Government. It should have representatives of the Zila Parishads and municipal authorities connected with the implementation of the regional plan. Its Chairman should be the Minister of Local Self-Government or the Urban Development Department so as to provide authoritative leadership. Besides a senior officer as the Chief Executive Officer, it should have separate members in charge of planning, engineering and finance."

The Committee also went into the question of those urban complexes or metropolitan areas which cut across the State boundaries, and suggested

6. John C. Dollens and Henry J. Schmandt, The Metropolis, Harper & Row, N.Y., 1965, p.392.

that, "it will be necessary to have, a Joint Consultative Committee of the two States at the ministerial level to decide on questions of policy and another Committee of officials to draw up the plan for the region as a whole. Once the guidelines of the plans are determined, the respective State Governments could undertake detailed planning and development within the framework of the overall plan."<sup>7</sup>

A word of caution may be said before closing this paper. There can neither be any ready-made solution for our urban problems; nor it is always possible to transplant foreign institutions. A solution has to be found out in each and every case on its merits. Nevertheless, it is time that bold steps in city and regional planning should be taken by the Government rather than tinkering at the problem here and there. We have to look at these issues not just in terms of planning for problem areas or on a city-by-city basis, but in terms of regional planning within the framework of national economic goals. Our city and regional plans have to be integrated parts of the State and national Five Year Plans.

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7. Report of the Rural-Urban Relationship Committee, Government of India, June 1966, Vol.I, p.53.



## Appendix

### List of various Acts governing the town-planning in the country

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- |                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Andhra Pradesh | 1. Madras Town Planning Act, 1920.                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 2. Assam          | 1. Assam Town and Country Planning Act, 1960.<br>2. Assam Slum Areas Improvement and Clearance Act.                                                                                                                                           |
| 3. Bihar          | 1. Bihar Town Planning and Improvement Trust Act, 1951.<br>2. Bihar Restriction of Uses of Land Act, 1948.                                                                                                                                    |
| 4. Delhi          | 1. Delhi Development Act, 1957.                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 5. Gujarat        | 1. Bombay Town Planning Act, 1954.                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 6. Haryana        | 1. Punjab Town Improvement Act, 1922.<br>2. Punjab Development of Damaged Areas Act, 1951.<br>3. Punjab Capital Regulation Act, 1952.<br>4. East Punjab Refugees & Building Sites Act, 1948.                                                  |
| 7. Kerala         | 1. Madras Town Planning Act, 1920.<br>2. Travancore Town Planning Regulation of 1908.<br>3. Travancore Town and Country Planning Act, 1920.                                                                                                   |
| 8. Madhya Pradesh | 1. C.P. & Berar Town Planning Act, 1948.<br>2. C.P. & Berar Regulation of Uses of Land Act, 1948.<br>3. Madhya Pradesh Town Periphery Control Act, 1960.                                                                                      |
| 9. Madras         | 1. Madras Town Planning Act, 1920.<br>2. Mettur & Bhavanisagar Township Act.                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 10. Maharashtra   | 1. Bombay Town Planning Act, 1915; (revised in 1954)<br>2. Metropolitan Regional Planning Board Act, 1964.                                                                                                                                    |
| 11. Mysore        | 1. City of Bangalore Improvement Act, 1945.<br>2. Mysore City Improvement Regulation, 1903.<br>3. Mysore Town and Country Planning Act, 1961.                                                                                                 |
| 12. Orissa        | 1. Town Planning & Improvement Trust Act, 1956.                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 13. Punjab        | 1. Punjab Town Improvement Act, 1922.<br>2. Punjab Development of Damaged Areas Act, 1951.<br>3. Punjab Capital Regulation Act, 1952.<br>4. East Punjab Refugees & Building Sites Act, 1948.<br>5. Punjab Peripheral Development Control Act. |
| 14. Rajasthan     | 1. Rajasthan Urban Improvement Act, 1959.                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 15. Uttar Pradesh | 1. U.P. Town Improvement Act, 1919.<br>2. U.P. Regulation of Building Operations Act, 1958.                                                                                                                                                   |
| 16. West Bengal   | 1. Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Area (Use and Development of Land) Control Act, 1965.                                                                                                                                                       |



SEMINAR ON ADMINISTRATION OF THE URBAN FRINGE  
(November 29-30, 1968)

An Outline of the Process of Peripheral  
Growth and Its Implications

by

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## AN OUTLINE ON THE PROCESS OF PERIPHERAL GROWTH AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Urban Growth beyond the jurisdiction of municipal corporations is an universal experience, although, wide differences exist in form, function and standard of these fringe developments.

In fact, most of the cities, particularly, the metropolitan centres have gained in size through peripheral growth.

The definition of fringe area, however, is not easy. Generally, it indicates physical growth of an urban area beyond the limits of an incorporated urban unit. But, when the new growth area is brought under a new local government whether that area ceases to be called fringe? The answer appears to be negative if the factors other than institutional (that too broadly) are examined. The peripheral areas, whether incorporated or unincorporated, are marked by lower land value, lower density and higher rate of population growth than the mother cities. Further, they heavily depend upon the central city economically as well as culturally. Of course, the satellite towns also bear these properties. The primary distinction between fringe and satellite lies in their respective physical location. Fringe areas are contiguous to the central city whereas the satellites are often physically separated although some may be contiguous. The satellites, however, are generally under organised civic governments, the fringe areas may be otherwise.

### PROCESS OF FRINGE DEVELOPMENTS

Mainly economic factors aided by the improvements in transportation systems foster fringe growth. But, these factors operate differently in Western and Indian situations. In Western countries, particularly in the U.S., Urban sprawl is associated with the income distribution which slopes downward to the center city.

There, suburbs and fringe areas with all modern facilities but with much lower density attract rich people and the poorer people stay in the congested city center. But, in India, situation is totally different. Here the cities itself do not have adequate civic services, the conditions in the fringes are still worse. For amplification, a leaf may be taken out of the Basic Development Plan of Calcutta Metropolitan District:

"The greatest pressure for the physical expansion of the existing urban area through the development of new land occurs around the points of highest population density; that is, around the cities of Calcutta and Howrah, particularly the former..... The suburbs closest to Calcutta - North and South Dum Dum, Kanarhati and Panihati, Garden Reach and South Dum Dum - have almost overnight become substantial communities (p. 51-61). And, within the city itself, the fastest growth has occurred in the low lying, unsewered, poorly drained lands in the Tangra, Topsia and Kasba area along the eastern fringe bordering the pestilent marshes of the Salt Lakes, and in the wards of Tollygunge in the extreme south. On the outskirts of both Calcutta and Howrah even low lands liable to periodic flooding, in areas without sewerage and drainage facilities, with poor quality ground-water supplies, and served by inadequate transportation into central city areas, are beginning to show spectacular increases in market value as the search intensifies for living space as near as possible to existing centres of employment

The experience of Calcutta is repeated elsewhere in this country. The dominant motive force for this peripheral growth is economic, to find a shelter or industrial land close to metropolitan center - at cheaper rent. Here, general income level and transportation development are low enough to discourage long distance sprawl. Neither, there are adequate resources to condition environmental deficiencies. As a result, most of the urban fringes of our country are distress areas so far as civic standards and living conditions are concerned.

Moreover, the peripheral growth, unlike Western countries, is not associated with dispersal from the central city. There is no load shifting from the spatial point of view. Reasons are obvious; people who can afford to live in the central city feel little inclination to go into the fringe areas where living conditions are poor. Berry and his colleagues found out that continuous increase of density took place in the central wards of Calcutta from 1881 to 1951, in contrast to the Western cities like Chicago, Pittsburgh, etc, where metropolitan sprawl gained in population at the cost of central cities. Berry accordingly theorized that non-Western, and particularly Indian cities have a pattern of growth marked by rising residential agglomeration in the city center concurrently with outward expansion and population growth in the fringe areas. (Berry, Simmons and Tennant: Urban Population Densities; Structure and Change, Geog. Rev. Vol. 53, 1963, pp. 389 - 405). The observation is valid in general sense, as no major



Indian metropolitan city has declined in population, although there had been feeble dispersal from the city centre (e.g. Calcutta during 1951-61).

#### PROBLEMS RELATED TO FRINGE GROWTH

Apart from deplorable living due to bad environmental conditions, the unplanned fringe developments pose several serious problems. The private action has simply followed the traditional pattern of moving as short a distance away from the centre as possible to those places where land is available, and accepting the often concealed extra cost of development without proper public facilities. This process of course adds to the ultimate public as well as private expenditure" (Basic Development Plan of Page 17). Suburban transportation service is also often much below the standard of city proper's mass transport system. Without going into the details, the major implications of fringe development may be listed as -

- (1) growth in uncongenial environmental conditions make the residents of the fringe areas prone to diseases which also affect the health of the city,
- (2) unplanned intrusion into physically undesirable situations requires heavy financial commitments for improvement programs,
- (3) continuous fringe development leads to traffic congestions in city center particularly during peak

hours, as seldom, growth in the fringe areas is associated with development of civic centers in respective growth areas. Majority of the people flock to old city center for jobs and other services,

(4) as most of the fringe dwellers have a low income level, their tax paying capacity is too limited to support sustained improvement programs of the municipalities which might have been organised in certain fringe areas.

#### APPROACH TOWARDS PLANNING

The answer to the problem of controlling undesirable peripheral growth may be found in two ways, corrective and preventive.

The large urban agglomerations which are split up into multiple urban governments of 'n' size variations need to be regrouped so as to attain a sound financial base adequate to support standardisation of services.

The preventive measures would have to take one or all of the following courses:

- (a) delimitation of urbanisable area around the town centers,
- (b) imposition of appropriate land use control rules on this area,
- (c) development of town centers at suitable space intervals.

A reference to the United Kingdom's experience in this field may be relevant. Previously there were 133 public authorities exercising municipal functions in Greater London. The multiplicity of the governments acted as constraints for ensuring efficiency in municipal services and administration. The government set up a Royal Commission in 1957 to devise a solution. The Commission recommended that a single elected authority, the Greater London Council, should be organised to be responsible for those services which must be conceived and executed for the whole conurbation. Secondly, a new system of 'Second-tier' authorities, i.e. 52 London Boroughs with a population between 100,000 and 150,000 was proposed to be set up to look after more local aspects of government. Eventually, the Greater London Council and 52 London Boroughs with populations ranging from 170,000 to 340,000 were formed and took control in 1965. Traffic and Transportation, Water supply, major housing programs, sewage, fire and ambulance services would be the concern of Greater London Council. The Borough Councils will be responsible for local housing, welfare services, public libraries, primary and secondary education.

In addition to this institutional re-orientation Britain tried to solve the problem of growing urban concentrations through the New Towns Act of 1946. The central aim of the New Towns is to relieve congestion in the large urban agglomerations by accommodating their overspill population together with industries as sources of employment. In the U.K., there are now 16 New Towns in various stages of growth, another 7 are in the process of germination. It is

remarkable that some 280,000 population from London alone has shifted to these one or other New Towns (1964).

The British experience is of great value to us. The people will naturally love to live near the metropolitan centres. This human urge cannot be entirely denied by simple enactment of regulations, the realistic approach would be to organise this tendency into desirable forms of urban growth which may resemble somewhat like New Towns of Britain. Essentially, these towns are examples of cluster growth of Urban places. A constructive answer to the problems of growing giant urban agglomeration may be the development of regional city centers with subsidiary towns spaces at planned intervals in the urban zone of the growth pole. The preliminary step would be therefore, the demarcation of the unland or urban field (mainly on the basis of daily flow characteristics) of the regional urban growth poles which is to be followed by the selection of locations for secondary towns.

Through what institutional and financial organisations such plans could be implemented or how the existing urban agglomerations be divided into a limited number of resourceful urban councils (municipalities) is an area on which the author has little to say. It is hoped that an experiment which had been successful in one part of the world would be given due consideration. However, the need for adjustments under Indian conditions cannot be contested.





CONFIDENTIAL

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Seminar on Administration of the Urban  
Fringe

(November 29-30, 1968)

The Urban Fringe

by

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1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the general principles of the theory of the structure of the universe.

## The Urban Fringe

Rapid, sometimes bewildering, growth of the population and area of a number of urban centres has brought into focus, suddenly as it were, the existence of "urban sprawl" and "urban fringe". It is as well because both call for urgent action. The problem for the consideration of this seminar is not whether urbanisation is a desirable phenomenon or not. But if urbanisation takes place and we are not doing anything to halt and disperse it, something has to be done to face its consequences realistically. The consequences of such a development within the incorporated area are essentially the head-ache of the local or other government designated for the purpose (in fact, there may be several authorities in some cases within the same area). By and large, such authority or authorities are adequately legally empowered to deal with the internal situation. It is another matter that they may suffer from inefficiency, incomplete comprehension of the nature of the urban problem, a lack of foresight and of financial resources and thus not be able to keep their house in order. But, apart from being rather helpless spectators, and quite often victims, of the "sprawl" outside their area, urban authorities can, at the present moment, generally do little towards the amelioration of the worsening situation around them. It is at once a paradoxical and unmerciful situation: whereas the central town and the fringe depend upon each other in various ways, both suffer on account of an undefined relationship - the poor relation, the fringe, from approbrium and neglect and the rich relation, the central town, from financial and physical burdens resulting in a levelling down of the quality of its administration. The problem is thus real, however difficult the solutions to it.

It would be perfectly legitimate on the part of anybody concerned with the subject to enquire, without pretending to be naive, as to what

is a fringe. It would need some gumption to avoid behaving like Jesting Pilate and elude the answer. For it is very difficult to define and identify a "fringe" in any precise terms and in a manner generally acceptable. If one may alter the famous lines of Tennyson somewhat, one might say "the untravelled world whose margin fades and fades for ever." The fringe is constantly shifting, largely outwards; seldom does it shrink. What is, therefore, a fringe today might, indeed, be tomorrow the inner periphery of a broader fringe, or, what quite often happens, the outer periphery of the town or city. It is generally constantly shifting or expanding. A static "fringe" may, indeed, be the portent of a decaying city. In fact, if the core city continues to thrive and the fringe remains static (in all aspects), it would be a very happy position and administrative problems could easily be solved. But, alas ! that favourable conjunction seldom takes place: on the contrary, the fringe acts as the sensitive barometer to the central town's condition and grows or withers with the city. So, one thing is quite clear and that is that one cannot look for a well-defined fringe which would stay in that position for any reasonable length of time. And it is this quality of the fringe that causes trouble. Many of us can recall the first traces of fringe formation in several of our towns - Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi, Kanpur and others - decades ago. We have now forgotten their existence in the fringe state as most such areas have been incorporated into the towns and now constitute some of their best developed areas. Human memory fails the race on crucial occasions. And we continue to ignore or neglect today's fringes in the same manner for we have not bothered to inquire into the travails of the first and earlier fringes and of those who had to deal with them. If Time could only stop and start moving back-wards for a while, it would unfold a sad tale of

neglect and callousness and folly. Going forward it is revealing nothing much better. Theoreticians, purists and academicians may cavil at any attempt to define the fringe or to deal with it as it is so impalpable and therefore defies lasting treatment. That may, indeed, be so but still it is a reality at a particular moment of time and can and must be dealt with promptly, even if the action programme leaves gaps and doubts.

For practical purposes, that is to say, in order to tackle the problem even on a temporary basis, an attempt can be made to delineate the fringe on a rough and ready basis. Without going into the causes of fringe accretion - not they are far to seek - we may cast a look at the fringe and study its attributes. Of course, such a study would imply knowledge about that area immediately prior to appearance of those attributes or characteristics. (This exercise, incidentally, emphasises the need of constant watchfulness in regard to fringe areas). Such a study would fall under several distinct categories. The most important of these would pertain to changes in population, its density and its composition from time to time. As a fringe begins to form, the tendency is for the population in the area to increase, and for a fixed area, an increase in density is likely to take place simultaneously. As the fringe begins to get stabilised and acquires its own entity - intermediate between the central city and the out-lying rural areas - the sex ratio of the population would probably register a change. Side by side, there is bound to be a gradual but perceptible change in the occupation pattern of the population in the area. All these are significant symptoms of change. A factor that will also come to notice in a fringe area would be the nature of the housing. More likely than not, quantitative and qualitative changes will take place in this direction and data as regards housing



will provide one of the indices for purposes of delineation of the fringe area. Another factor of considerable significance will be a change in the land-use pattern. This will naturally be related to the change in the occupation pattern of the population and the changes in the housing situation in the area under study. A factor which contributes to the growth of a fringe but is none-the-less significant is the communication system in the area. One could carry out sophisticated sociological and economic studies too to add to the indices and these would undoubtedly help refine the conclusions. The main point to be borne in mind is that a fringe has to be spotted out contemporaneously with the city development and the delineation has to take place within a relatively narrow compass and with such tools of identification as may be readily available. As much as human situations demand short-term and long-term solutions, so do processes of diagnosis and identification require both quick aids and sophisticated ones. Palliatives and first-aid have a place in therapy. Of course, so long as they do not tend to smother enquiry and abort more final diagnosis and remedy.

There may be less despair in getting at some kind of a workable definition of a fringe area but when it comes to finding answers for meeting the situation, the matter appears complicated. The reason is that, as contradistinguished from the mere physical delineation of the fringe, the problems of administration of the area bring us face to face with human beings, and a variety of subjective elements, not imponderable though, come into play. However, before any attempt is made to offer the possible alternatives for handling the fringe, it may be desirable to look into the need of dealing with it. Where a fringe is in the process of forming itself within the administrative jurisdiction of an urban

Generally speaking, municipal laws give ample powers for preventing the growth of a fringe. That timely action is not taken is often due to lack of a full awareness of the dangerous potentiality of such a development, absence of plans and political short-sightedness or timidity. Where a fringe forms outside the jurisdiction of an urban local body - and it is such cases that will mainly engage our attention in this seminar - there is, to use an inimitable local expression, no ma bap of the fringe. The central town is either not concerned, or even if it is, it has no authority or legal power to deal with the development. The administrative agency for rural areas is often not interested in preventing this kind of a growth. That agency operates in a closed compartment concerning itself, if at all, with matters currently considered to be basically rural and planned physical development and housing hardly ever occur to them as falling within their purview. And no concerted attempt has been made at higher policy-making levels to ensure the performance of so important a function on the part of rural administrations. The absence of resources may be a real hindrance but the reason is mainly of the nature of an alibi. The fact is - and we must face it if we want to deal with the problem boldly - that this function has not yet entered the thought processes in any concrete shape. And since the accretion of a fringe around an urban centre causes no immediate trouble to rural administrations and does not generate any social, economic or political pressures to cause dis-comfiture to them, it is easy enough to ignore the malady. After all, it is the central city which is the victim of the development and it will have to carry the burden, willy - nilly. It is interesting to note that the forces generated by such a fringe work upon an area and an authority not statutorily concerned with it: just the opposite

of what it should be administratively ! The resultant confusion and absence of timely action is well-known. Once a fringe of some kind takes shape, it brings in its wake numerous baffling human and physical problems, the solution of which through normal methods becomes well-nigh impossible. Apart from the extreme hardship caused to the residents of the fringe, it creates serious financial and administrative problems for the central city; traffic gets out of control, health-hazards are created, services get strained. The subsequent cost to the community to remedy the situation is colossal and the continuing suffering of the human beings in the area before, during and after the introduction of remedial measures is acute. Thus the need to prevent and control the emergence of a fringe is obvious from all points of view. The transformation of human bones into corals under five fathoms of water may not be so disconcerting a culmination but the rapid and certain degeneration of live human beings and an otherwise decent physical environment through ignorance and neglect would be an appalling prospect.

It is not impossible for an urban authority to prevent the formation of a fringe within its area through proper planning and enforcement and the creation of an inviolable green belt. Though it must be pointed out that the device of a green belt is not an alternative to planning and phased development. It is a negative device but can be very effective if jealously guarded. Any way, physical devices can be resorted to in meeting the challenge. That enforcement fails or is not attempted with determination for various reasons is rather a reflection on the quality of the administration than on the merit of the solution.

The ingenuity of human beings to devise methods and create institutions for the solution of their problems is phenomenal. But

failure often results because the details are over-looked, or the entire kaleidoscope of relationships is not kept in focus, or, as is probably more true, personal or institutional prejudices and ambitions obfuscate the issues. Jurisdictional conflicts and parochialism at the local level stand in the way of a total perception of the nature of the problem and the higher levels of government display profound apathy and inertia. The result is that when a fringe acquires an ugly and threatening dimension, the easy device of its incorporation into the central city is invariably taken resort to, much to the inconvenience of the city and the dwellers of the fringe. It is not realised that incorporation may offer a solution for a particular static moment of time; it does not by itself resolve the problem of the fringe. A new fringe begins to take birth. One can brush off one layer of dandruff but another will soon form ! The kudos of the central city may be satisfied on account of accession of territory and population, but its capacity to deal with the added problems is not thereby enhanced or helped to grow. The result generally is an all round lowering of standards and increasing dissatisfaction among city-dwellers, not at all good for city administrations with public esteem already at a low ebb. To think in terms of empires and absolute autonomy is obsolete now in any situation; it is particularly impractical in regard to local governments. The answer, if it has to have permanence, must lie in solutions which provide for joint-ventures, parcelling out of spheres of responsibility depending upon physical proximity, capacity, nature of the obligation and the over-all needs of the entire area. Above all, it is a question of participation. Narrow and arbitrary area-wise jurisdictional compartments can be, as they often are, unreal and cannot contain the socio-economic forces.



A regional conception, both in regard to jurisdiction, and planning and development must, therefore, inspire policy and action and subordinate institutions built within it, not so much as hierarchies of authority (though not altogether avoidable) as sharers of functions. We are prone to take urban areas and our urban environment so much for granted that we often forget that the adjoining rural areas also exist and some parts of these will get urbanised sooner or later, or are contemporaneously in the process of such change. Thus the contiguous rural areas are very relevant to the central city, apart from being vital parts of the rural administrative agency's jurisdiction. It will be a mistake to treat such areas as a class apart. Until measures for organised regional planning are taken, the rural and the urban authorities concerned should get together, preferably under an informal arrangement, to investigate the nature and extent of the problem, the action that should be taken by each side not only for the amelioration of the conditions that have actually developed but also to ensure orderly future development for the benefit of the three concerned parties - the central city, the fringe and the rural administration. It has to be remembered that it is the human being who gains or loses depending on planned action or neglect and the human being on either side of the boundary is the same. It is true, financial difficulties will arise but in the initial stages only the most essential services, and those too of a comparatively sub-standard kind, may be provided. What needs to be safe-guarded most, and this will need all the ingenuity and determination, is land use. It is unplanned and uncontrolled land use which does the maximum initial damage and it is so difficult to undo the mischief later. It must also be emphasised that any joint-action on the part of the agencies involved



programme. It has to act not merely as a catalytic agent but must guide and assist the agencies concerned through all the stages. Many states have statutes of one kind or another which provide for a measure of control on the use and development of rural lands but very often the provisions are not applied at all, or, if they are, it is done in a wooden and mechanistic way, so that the control appears to be a super-imposition from a remote and inaccessible authority. The approach should be positive - to help organised development and not merely sweeping assertion of legal and police powers to prevent growth. For growth will take place, any how. It will be part of wisdom to regulate and guide it along pre-planned lines. The role of the state government in the achievement of the objectives in view is thus of paramount importance. Informal arrangements have been suggested as, within the political jurisdiction of a State, it may be easier to rely on them than on formalised structures, however logically impeccable, drawing their power from statutes and not from human good-will. Conflict and friction there will be but legal relationships rather help perpetuate conflicts and seldom help resolve them, and within a legally tight frame, even the State government's efforts to iron out difficulties can be stultified.

The main points that emerge from this discussion are that it is desirable to prevent the formation of a fringe whether within or outside the jurisdiction of an urban government and that with proper planning, implementation of development programmes and sound enforcement it is possible to ward off much of the trouble. It is far kinder to all concerned that a fringe does not come into existence at all than that unpleasant decisions have to be taken after-wards to deal with it. Where a fringe is already in existence, in some cases incorporation of the area in the central city would help provided such action is preceded

by proper plans to develop the area and followed by adequate and constant vigilance. In other cases, rural local administrations and the concerned urban governments must combine together under the state government to regulate and control the development in such areas. The position in the Indian context is neither acute nor wide-spread yet and if concerted action is taken, it is possible to stop further damage in the existing fringe areas and to prevent the formation of new fringes. It is to be noted that a green belt need not necessarily exist within an urban area. It can also be created as a substantial preventive measure outside it (of course, according to plan) and the rural administration concerned can ensure its inviolability. Where existing laws to control development in the rural areas and change of land use are inadequate for the purpose, they could be strengthened but it is obvious that no regulations on paper can help if the machinery for enforcement does not exist or is lax. Above all, the long term answer to a balanced rural-urban development is on a regional basis with regional planning and development authorities and local administrative units in the urban and the rural areas for the discharge of local functions.

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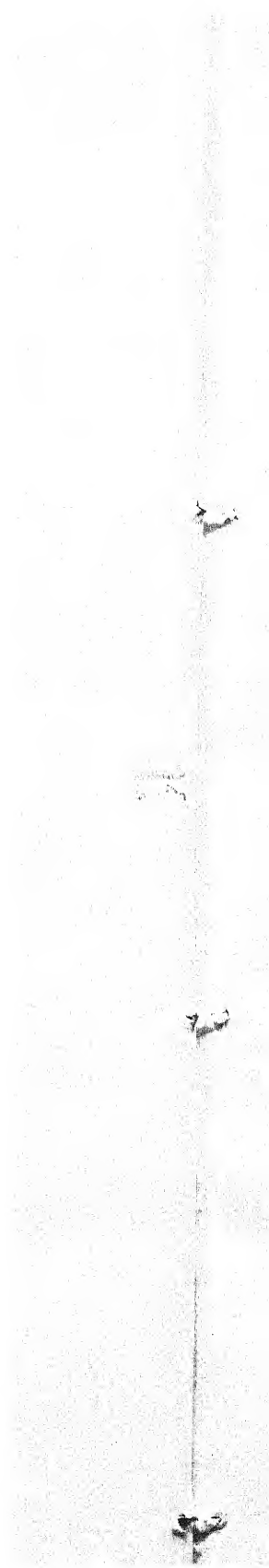
Seminar on Administration of the Urban Fringe  
(November 29-30, 1968)

Problems of Administration of the Urban Fringe

by

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## PROBLEMS OF ADMINISTRATION OF THE URBAN FRINGE

Urban sprawl, urban development, and peripheral growth are but necessary accompaniments of rapid urbanisation. There was a time when cities used to be contained within walls and municipal boundaries remained stable over long periods. In India the rate of urban growth was relatively slow and industrial development was confined to a few centres of trade and commerce in the first four decades of this century. During the last 30 years, however, the pace of urbanisation suddenly quickened and has left our towns and cities in disarray. The following table gives an idea of rapid urban expansion since the mid-thirties:-

|      | No. of<br>Towns | Class I<br>Cities<br>(Pop.<br>100000) | Urban<br>population<br>in<br>millions | %<br>decennial<br>increase | Indices of<br>increase<br>(1901=100) |
|------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1901 | 1917            | 25                                    | 25.85                                 | -                          | 100                                  |
| 1911 | 1909            | 26                                    | 25.94                                 | 0.35                       | 100                                  |
| 1921 | 2047            | 29                                    | 28.09                                 | 8.27                       | 109                                  |
| 1931 | 2019            | 31                                    | 33.45                                 | 19.12                      | 129                                  |
| 1941 | 2424            | 49                                    | 44.15                                 | 31.97                      | 171                                  |
| 1951 | 3060            | 76                                    | 62.44                                 | 41.43                      | 242                                  |
| 1961 | 2700            | 107                                   | 78.94                                 | 26.41                      | 305                                  |

It may be seen that while the urban population of India went up only by 7.6 millions in the first three decades 1901-1931, over 45 millions were added between 1931-1961. There were only six more cities with a population of one lakh or over in 1931 as compared to 1901 but the number of such cities increased from



31 in 1931 to 107 in 1961. The total number of towns which had increased to 3060 in 1951 declined to 2700 in 1961 Census because of the change in the definition of towns. As a result 803 places that were classified as towns in 1951 were treated as rural in the 1961 census. If the criteria of 1951 were kept constant and were applied to 1961 census the total number of towns would be very nearly 4000 and the rate of increase of the urban population would be much higher.

Till the nineteen thirties the municipal boundaries more or less remained stable and any increase in urban population was absorbed within the city limits. The pressure of urbanisation after 1941 led to uncontrolled development beyond municipal limits and about 70% of the Class I towns and a large number of smaller towns had to extend their jurisdiction during the decade 1951-1961.

The municipal boundaries, however, are generally extended much too late when the mischief has been done. There is expensive urban land cornered by industrialists and land speculators. Factories and slum tend to multiply in haphazard and un-controlled manner without making any provision for municipal services. When the municipality does extend its boundaries in due course it is called upon to shoulder a heavy burden of capital expenditure for providing civic amenities. Any scheme for urban expansion and development or for slum clearance becomes too expensive and far too difficult to execute.

### What is the Urban Fringe

All municipal Acts provide for the definition of municipal boundaries by notification by the State Government. In most cases boundaries are fixed in relation to the built up areas, where the municipal authority can levy and collect taxes and maintain services. It is rarely that surrounding urbanisable areas are included. In fact the concept of urbanisable area in the peripheral region of a town or city did not take any concrete shape till recently when city plans for regulated development came to be prepared.

The extent of urban fringe or the areas vulnerable to urban growth depend on a number of factors such as:-

- (1) existence of roads and railway lines;
- (2) availability of communication facilities viz, quick and cheap transport, telephone and postal services;
- (3) power and electricity;
- (4) importance and size of the core city in terms of trade and commerce, apart from its being an administrative, educational and tourist pilgrimage centre.

There is often a presumption that the urban fringe would be confined to a belt of about a mile or two beyond the municipal boundaries and some municipal Acts provide for control of building activity in such an area by the city municipality. This is an over-simplification. The intervening areas between such town groups as Dhanbad-Jharia-Sindri, Cochin-Ernaculam-Always, Baroda-Anand, Hubli-Dharwar, Thana-Kalyan-Ulhasnagar, Asansol-Durgapur are all urban fringes with high growth potential. Chandigarh starting on virgin land now has a

peripheral belt of about 10 miles, encompassing Pinjore and Kalka 15 to 18 miles away. The extent of the urban fringe may, therefore, vary from a small belt of ribbon growth in the case of lesser towns to sizeable regions around large cities. The peripheral region of a city, however, is often very much larger and the urban fringe rarely extends uniformly all round. It bulges along the arterial roads or railways like the spokes of a wheel leaving the land in-between more or less undeveloped - unless there is positive development of infrastructure undertaken by an Improvement Trust or development authority according to a master plan. In Jaipur, for instance the urban bulge extends to 5 to 7 miles along the Kota Road while on the other side of Amber towards Delhi there is hardly any urban growth. The urban fringe may become considerably extended and ribbon development intensified in particular directions due to existence of other urban pockets in the peripheral regions.

#### The Process of Fringe Development

The growth of suburbia and flight from the city core aided and encouraged by express highways and the automobile is a feature of the more affluent societies. In India, however, while there may be some stray areas of good residential development, suburban development has, by and large, been an ugly and chaotic growth, as a manifestation of increasing pressure on land and congestion in the town. The persisting influx of rural migrants and the growth of trade and commerce have led to:-

- (a) over-crowding of accommodation in the municipal area, growth of slums, mixed uses of land and buildings leading to insanitation and traffic bottlenecks;
- (b) peripheral growth and urban sprawl beyond the municipal boundaries marked by haphazard construction activity and land speculation;
- (c) a process of change in land use, land-ownership, cropping pattern, occupational pattern of the population living in habitations in the urban fringe; and
- (d) engulfed by chaotic urban development, the villages, gradually divorced and divested of their lands, became overcrowding slums without urban facilities.

Private entrepreneurs acquire large chunks of land on roadsides and in depths and find it convenient to set up industrial establishments because:-

- (i) land is cheap;
- (ii) they escape the regulatory provisions of municipal laws in respect of building construction as well as location of obnoxious manufacturing units;
- (iii) they can take advantage of economies of localisation of industries, labour and material supplies and other urban facilities; and
- (iv) they do not have to pay municipal taxes.

The situation has also been exploited by Government establishments and public sector undertakings. The difference however is that such undertakings are usually sizeable and have townships which are properly planned and laid out with necessary internal services. Nevertheless, they put a strain on the city services like other private developments and do not provide all the accommodation required for their employees. They also induce other private development and growth near their township. There are a



number of similar private industry townships also. The HEL township in Bhopal; HAL, ITI, IIT units in Bangalore metropolitan area; Chakeri and Central Ordnance establishments in Kanpur; a number of private and public sector undertakings along the Asansol Durgapur highway are some of the instances in point.

The scarcity of land and its soaring prices in the city also lead to parcelling out of land with residential plots by individual land owners and colonisers in the peripheral areas. The land is disposed of without any development and often without a proper layout. Whenever layouts are prepared, they are sub-standard and stamp of approval is sometimes obtained from local panchayats. The evil continues to persist inspite of some action having been taken by the State Governments on the advice of their Town Planning Departments. Generally the legal tools and necessary administrative machinery to control and regulate construction and development in the urban fringe do not exist.

#### Administrative framework in the Fringe Areas

Before the introduction of Panchayati Raj, the entire area of a district not expressly designated by notification as municipal, was under the jurisdiction of the District Board - an anomalous local authority with extremely limited activities. In West Bengal and Bihar there used to be in addition, a system of Union Boards for groups of villages with a population of about 10,000. The introduction of the Panchayati Raj institutions has brought into existence a network of small local authorities in the fringe areas. The pattern of local



administration in the urban fringe might have one or more of the following authorities:-

- (i) A number of village Panchayats with one or more upper tier Panchayat Samities at the Block level;
- (ii) In some cases where the urban fringe may cut across District boundaries, the Zila Parishads would also be involved. Some metropolitan complexes go beyond State boundaries and raise special problems of coordination.
- (iii) Sometimes there may be a small town area committee, a Government colony or a company township with a notified area Committee or a Sanitary Board exercising municipal functions. Such bodies exist around a large number of growing towns and cities in the country.
- (iv) The existence of full fledged municipal authorities in the urban fringe of metropolitan cities is only a step forward. Calcutta with its more or less frozen municipal boundaries and a fast growing belt going 40 miles north on either side of the Hooghly has long had a chain of under-developed urban local bodies. Bombay's fringe includes cities like Thana, Kalyan, Ulhasnagar, Bhivandi etc.
- (v) Superimposed on the urban complex as a whole may be some electric and power supply board, a transport agency, a water supply and sewerage undertaking, and a planning and development authority.

### The Problem

In physical, social and economic terms an urban complex has its own unity and continuity. But, administratively, the city seems to stop on the municipal boundary. There is a fragmentation of authority and a variety of administrative organisations tuned to different objectives. The city can no longer be planned and developed in isolation from its environs. Roads, communications and transport, water supply and drainage and development of other urban facilities call for an area-wide treatment.

The industrial townships in the peripheral areas are usually carefully planned and well laid out. But these isolated pockets require to be woven into an over-all pattern of communications, and integrated into a common water supply and drainage service. Planning authorities, wherever they exist, have to face serious opposition and resistance from these established units which come up against a rational communications and land use plan.

It is, however, in the remaining areas largely under the jurisdiction of rural authorities where most of the haphazard urban growth goes on and as already indicated these townships are not a little responsible for giving an impetus to such growth.

The Panchayati Raj institutions that operate immediately outside the municipal boundaries are neither conscious of the problems created by the process of urbanisation nor are they suitably equipped by way of legal powers or technical and administrative personnel to control and regulate such development. Usually no building plan need be submitted for sanction nor are there any obligations on the part of the developer to provide any amenities before taking up construction. The adjoining municipal authority does not generally have any power to control development and it cannot spend any amounts from its funds in the areas outside its jurisdiction.

In spite of the 100 per cent assistance given by the Government of India over the last ten years for the preparation of Master Plan of cities and urban regions, a large number of our growing urban centres are still without any development plan. In many cases

even if the Master Plan has been drawn up, adequate legal provision for their enforcement and appropriate machinery for the purpose is not always available. The local bodies, urban or rural, functioning in the area lack the perspective and the will, to control and regulate development.

#### Attempts at Planning Control

Some of the State Governments undertook special legislation to restrict and regulate construction and development in areas outside municipal limits, as might be notified in this behalf, such as:-

- 1) Madhya Pradesh Regulation of uses of Land Act, 1948.
- 2) Madhya Pradesh Town Periphery (Control) Act, 1960.
- 3) Bihar Restrictions of uses of Land Act, 1948.
- 4) Punjab Peripheral Development Control Act.
- 5) U.P. Regulation of Building Operation Act, 1958.
- 6) The Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Area (use and Development of Land) Control Act, 1965.

The common feature of these Acts has been to provide for the obligation on the part of a private builder or developer to obtain prior sanction of a controlling authority in a specific area notified for the purpose. The duties are generally entrusted to some District officer in addition to his existing duties. The legislation is purely negative and the field officer generally does not have clear guidelines on which to act. The recent Calcutta

legislation seeks to set up a machinery with a controller and additional or assistant controllers who would perhaps be guided by the Basic Development Plan for the metropolitan District, but the machinery is yet to take shape. In U.P. serious attempts have been made to make use of this law in conjunction with the U.P. Town Improvement Act. The jurisdiction of the Improvement Trust is made co-extensive with the Master Plan area and the executive head of the Trust is made the prescribed Authority to enforce the Regulation of Building Control Act, which is made to cover the municipal area also. The whole management is complicated and cumbersome with a confusion of authorities, although it helps to fill up the gaps in planning law. By and large these laws have failed to achieve their objectives.

A more comprehensive approach is a Town Planning law that provides for preparation of development plan for a specified area and its enforcement therein. The earliest of such laws were the Bombay Town Planning Act of 1915 and Madras Town Planning Act, 1920. The Bombay Act was extensively revised in 1954 but still it assigned the planning function to the local authorities within their respective jurisdiction, which ruled out any action to control fringe development particularly in the area of rural local bodies. Maharashtra again adopted a revised Act in 1964 to provide for regional planning and metropolitan planning Boards have been set up for Bombay, Poona and Nagpur. Enforcement and detailed planning will be the tasks of the respective local authorities. But the question is whether the rural local authorities which dominate the



fringe areas could perform these duties.

The Town and Country Planning organisation of the Ministry of Health, Family Planning and Urban Development had some time ago circulated a model Town and Country Planning Code for adoption by the State Legislatures. Apart from the Maharashtra Act there are two other Acts which would approximate to the Model Code viz, the Mysore Town and Country Planning Act 1961 as amended in 1963, and the Assam Town Planning Act 1960. Under the Mysore Law the State Government may constitute a Planning authority for a local planning area apart from the metropolitan region of Bangalore. In its absence the local body is also the planning authority. The power of enforcement however, lies with the executive heads of the local bodies urban or rural except for Bangalore and Mysore where special provisions exist. So that, by and large, the problem of regulating fringe development in general remains fluid. The Assam Act, however, by an amendment of 1962 provides for the setting up of a Development Authority for an area for which a plan has been prepared to control, regulate and promote development in the entire Master Plan area. Most towns do not, however, have any Development Authority.

A combination of Planning and implementing authority is to be found in the Town Planning and Improvement Trust Acts of Bihar and Orissa passed in 1951 and 1956 respectively. They do not conform to the model planning law but unlike the practice elsewhere, the Improvement Trusts in these States can be set up and empowered to prepare Master Plan for any area notified by Government.



In the absence of such a Trust, however, the local bodies are to perform the function. The effectiveness of this legislation would therefore, depend on an Improvement Trust being constituted and its area suitably demarcated as to cover all fringes and peripheral areas that are exposed to pressures of urbanisation. The Rajasthan Urban Improvement Act, 1959 partakes of the character of the Bihar and Orissa Acts, except that the planning function is performed by the State Directorate of Town Planning as in Assam.

The Delhi Development Authority which replaced the Delhi Improvement Trust under the Delhi Development Act 1957, also combines the functions of planning and urban development. Its powers of regulation and control are however, limited to what may be notified as the "Development Area". The municipal Corporation of Delhi has the responsibility of regulation and control in rural Delhi, an area of about 400 sq miles. The most vulnerable areas of the urban fringe however lie in Haryana and U.P. along the G.T., Mathura and Gurgaon and Rohtak roads. A degree of coordination in the regulation and control of these surrounding areas is sought to be obtained through a High Power Committee for the National Capital Region presided over by the Union Home Minister, with representatives from the adjoining States.

#### Possible Administrative Pattern

The fact is that administrative boundaries and programmes and objectives of local bodies take no cognisance of the problems created by fringe development and their present and future implication

for the growth and expansion of our urban areas. Even legal provisions, wherever they exist, are halting and incomplete and have proved ineffective as they have not been backed by appropriate administrative machinery. There are three essential elements that must be available to ensure effective control of peripheral growth, viz; planning law, a plan, and an administrative machinery charged both with the negative function of restrictions and control and positive duties to undertake development according to plan.

Alternative administrative arrangements that can be considered are:-

- (a) expansion of municipal boundaries involving merger and annexation;
- (b) clothing rural local authorities functioning in the peripheral area with power of planning and development;
- (c) creation of special development authorities for the peripheral areas;
- (d) joint committees; and
- (e) area wide planning and development (upper tier) authorities.

The method of annexation and merger of surrounding areas has been adopted in the case of a number of municipal authorities, by extension of municipal limits in advance so as to include substantial peripheral rural areas that are likely to be urbanised in the coming 15 or 20 years in accordance with an over-all physical plan of communication and land uses. In Uttar Pradesh for instance at the time of the formation of corporations for the five leading KAVAI

towns in 1960, merging together the municipal Boards and the Improvement Trusts/Development Board, the wider boundaries of the latter to which the Master Plan more or less extended, were made the new municipal boundaries bringing in a large number of peripheral villages and open fields. Sizeable areas were similarly added in Poona, Nagpur etc. The Delhi Municipal Corporation Act 1957 led to the merger of nine municipal/notified area committees as well as the dissolution of the District Board with about 300 villages and 400 sq. miles of rural territory. Only the New Delhi Municipal Committee and the Cantonment Board with a total area of about 33 sq. miles were left out.

On the other hand, well-established municipal bodies are averse to taking over surrounding under-developed areas, which involves a heavy strain on their resources. Calcutta Corporation for instance have resisted any proposal for the extension of its boundaries so that while the Corporation itself has an area of less than 40 sq. miles, the Calcutta Metropolitan district has gone on expanding and has now a continuous chain of 35 municipal bodies all in a low state of development. In Delhi it has been found that the rural areas demand services which under the present state of development of the area it is not possible to give, and the tax rates and receipts are inordinately low. The Corporation has nevertheless been trying to provide some municipal amenities and extending roads and electricity lines to these areas but the cost has been about Rs. 150 lakhs a year against a revenue of only about Rs. 6 lakhs - to say nothing of the loss of revenue from octroi due to the inclusion of these areas in the city. The Corporations in U.P. have had similar experience.

Moreover, the rural areas with their own local government structure oppose their merger with the city, which will also expose them to higher taxation. It has also been seen that the municipal bodies generally adopt a lenient attitude in dealing with construction activity in the rural periphery apart from the over-all weaknesses in their enforcement machinery. The Rural Urban Relationship Committee also pointed out that the municipal bodies are generally handicapped in the performance of the functions of planning and development due to limited resources and lack of technical personnel (para 6.13 - Vol. I) and go on to quote the Committee on urban Land Policy, which observed:-

"The urban local bodies ----- being elected bodies with an already wide range of functions and limited resources are not, in our opinion, the proper agencies to whom may be entrusted the important functions of land acquisition, development and disposal, nor would they be effective enough in bringing about the desired coordination in land policy measures of the various agencies involved in the urban area".

Nevertheless barring metropolitan areas and towns and cities with very high growth rate, the inclusion of sizeable areas within municipal boundaries may be a good solution provided the urban local body has suitable technical staff and is fully oriented to the needs of urban development in accordance with a master plan, for the enforcement of which it should have the legal powers and necessary resources.

As regards the second alternative, it is even less likely that any power of planning and development could be exercised by a village Panchayat or a Panchayat Samity. The Rural-Urban Relationship Committee examined this question. The Committee observed:-

"It is significant that most of the problems of urbanisation relate to haphazard growth and development in areas that lie beyond municipal limits and within the jurisdiction of Panchayati Raj bodies. It is not unusual even for layout plans for land development, sponsored by private persons, being sanctioned by the panchayats without sufficient awareness of the implications of grant of such permission. They do not take into account the plans, if any, that may have been drawn up for the area by the municipal bodies or some other planning agency. Nor do the panchayats have the necessary orientation or the technical and administrative equipment to regulate such developmental activities".

(para 5.09)

Moreover the interests of towns and surrounding villages are so closely inter-linked that their proper development requires a common unit of planning and administration. The Committee further pointed out that:-

"It is essential that the objectives of healthy rural-urban relationship are seen in the light of a developing economy and the attendant processes of rural migration and urban expansion".

(para 5.12)

The third alternative of having special authorities operating in the peripheral areas such as Improvement Trust, Housing Board or Planning and Development authority have been tried but they have not been able to take an over-all coordinated view of urban extension, its regulation and control. Such authorities also operate within



limited jurisdiction for limited purposes and the Committee on Urban Land Policy did not consider these agencies "constituted as they are today as equal to the task". It is also been seen that the existence of such authorities has been the source of conflict of jurisdiction and opposite policies have been pursued by the special authority and the urban local body. Improvement Trusts and Housing Boards do not generally have any overall perspective of planning and they have largely confined themselves to formulation of isolated schemes and development of urban pockets here and there. Engaged exclusively in the development of pockets of land, they do not take into account the problems of large community facilities such as trunk water and sewerage mains and arterial roads. Their interest for controlling fringe development is confined to the development area in their immediate charge. Nevertheless the pattern adopted in Bihar, Orissa as well as in Rajasthan is capable of being supplemented and improved so as to fulfil the requirements of regulating fringe development in particular and promoting planned growth in general.

A device that is sometimes resorted to is the setting up of Joint Committees of the various local bodies in a given area to consider common problems and to arrive at mutual decisions. All local legislations provide for the setting up of Joint Committees which are deliberative agencies and any decision would require the concurrence of the constituent bodies. The execution of any programmes in line with the decision of such Joint Committees is no easy task. This provision of Joint Committees was utilised for instance for some

of the towns in Kerala particularly in the area of greater Cochin. It was, however, found necessary to have a common authority such as the Cochin Corporation.

As the Rural-Urban Relationship Committee pointed out:-

"Mechanical representation and joint committees cannot be expected even to comprehend, much less to implement, these extremely complex policies and programmes so vital to effective national development ..... the bigger and more complex an urban area, the larger the corresponding region embracing within its boundaries rural and urban groups. All these regions, large and small, include a fairly broad spectrum of agricultural, industrial, commercial and other types of activities, all closely inter-related and requiring various common services such as health, education, water-supply, drainage and transportation. In the region, there is a hierarchial pattern of settlements bound together in a system of functionally interlinked and inter-dependent units. There is thus a continuum of communities that stretches from the smallest village to the largest metropolis". (Para 5.15)

The Committee, therefore, recommended that a "single agency should be made responsible for the planning and development, and performance of other area-wide function such as water supply, sewerage and drainage facilities". These authorities should also be in a position to coordinate the activities of different agencies involved in the implementation of the development plan of the urban area. Supported by a suitable town and country planning legislation these authorities can ensure integrated development of rural urban areas in the regional context and can be effective agencies for enforcing urban land policies.

This agency should form more or less an upper-tier local authority charged with the performance of area wide functions of planning and plan implementation which the local authorities, urban

or rural, in the area cannot themselves by their nature, size and jurisdiction effectively perform. The local authorities can also help in enforcing the area plan in their limited jurisdiction in accordance with the instructions of the area-wide authority.

It is recognised that of all the 330 districts in the country hardly about a hundred have got sizeable growing towns and most of these large towns are district headquarters. The Committee, therefore recommended the setting up of a statutory planning and development authority for such districts under the Chairmanship of the Commissioner of the division with members including the District Magistrate, President of the Cantonment Board, Chairman/Mayor of municipal authorities in the area, Chairman and other representatives of the Zila Parishad and special representatives of railways, industries etc. as may be nominated by the State Governments. This authority with a Chief Executive Officer and requisite technical staff should be able to take care of the planning and development of municipal towns in the district as also watch any possible urban growth that may require necessary regulation.

For metropolitan areas the Committee proposed the setting up of City Regional Planning and Development Authority, as the upper tier organisation with specific functions. Wherever an urban complex or metropolitan area cuts across city boundaries, it will be necessary to have a Joint Consultative Committee of the States concerned at ministerial level to decide questions of policy and another committee of technical and administrative officers to draw up detailed plans of the region as well. The development within the

framework of the overall plan can be undertaken by the statutory body in the respective States.

In districts which are not having rapid urbanisation the RVRG proposed to set up special committees or zila Parishad which should function in accordance with the direction issued by the town plan department of the State Government so as to take care of any areas subject to urban growth.

These are the possible alternatives for the problem of administration of fringe areas tied up with the larger question of a coordinated machinery for regulated development of an expanding urban area.

What the Committee had in mind was

"an administrative system which may be called, for want of a better expression, area management. That is to say, a whole area should be treated as one unit for administrative purpose and rural and urban areas falling within it should be treated as integral parts of the area for the purpose of overall planning and implementation of development projects. This will promote political and emotional integration and remove the hiatus which exists between the rural and urban dwellers and pave the way for the evolution of an organic community ..... The introduction of a system of planning for the whole district, leaving details to be filled up by the local areas, will be the first step in the process of building up a new system of development administration, which will abolish the distinction between rural and urban areas in regard to quality and treatment (Para 5.24).

SEMINAR ON ADMINISTRATION OF THE URBAN FRINGE  
(November 29-30, 1968)

Planning of Urban Fringe in Metropolitan Areas

by

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## PLANNING OF URBAN FRINGE IN METROPOLITAN AREAS

### INTRODUCTION

The rapid pace of industrial expansion and urbanization have hastened the growth of urban centres in India. The forces operating behind urban growth - the social, cultural and economic have drawn people towards the cities. Consequently the growth of a metropolitan area has become a continuous process. In spite of all the administrative and planning controls, this growth continues to expand around the outer edges in the shape of land which is always in the process of conversion from rural to urban use. This transitional zone is the scene of urban sprawl. The expansion of such zone outside the city limit is known as 'Fringe Growth'. The striking feature of this growth is its concentrated form around all the highways and rail links entering the metropolitan area; the expansion is in a linear fashion, leaving pieces of land on the back side. The population of this area depends for its economic and quite often social needs totally on the city, but may follow the way of life which is rural in character. Although this population so heavily depends on the city for its existence, it very tactfully avoids all controls of local authorities by staying outside the boundary of the city. This process of growth in the fringe area is threatening the social environment of the city and has posed challenging problems to town planners as well as administrators.

### CASUAL FACTOR OF FRINGE GROWTH

The fringe growth in metropolitan areas in India has a deep rooted cause. Our metropolitan towns are not only growing in size but are also getting modernized. The heavy migration from the rural areas to the metropolitan centres makes such areas places of strange contradictions - the highly educated and illiterate, rich and poor, posh localities and

slums, sophisticated art centres and cheap entertainments, automobiles and cycle rickshaws, organized business centres and pavement markets.

To bring sense to this confusion, the planners in India have resorted to give around the city a systematic land use and then to cover this area with a green belt and a little farther away, proposals to plan ring towns, hoping that future migrants would go to these towns. But poor economic and educational background of the migrants motivate them to stay in that part of the city where mostly slums exist. Due to the operation of slum clearance schemes and strict zoning regulations in the city, the poor migrants are later forced to move out to areas near the periphery of the city.

The presence of fringe communities in metropolitan centres is thus the bursting out of central city and encroaching those areas, where controls are minimum and land prices are within the reach of these people. It is basically the extension of slums in the centre of the city to its periphery.

#### PROBLEMS CREATED BY FRINGE GROWTH

The important problems brought about by the growth of fringe areas are those of land use, urban transportation, multiplication of administrative units and the failure of these units to work together. This growth also brings in its wake certain important national policy issues, an important one being, how far good agricultural land around the metropolitan centre can be allowed to be eaten up by the spreading urban giants. At times fringe growth takes such proportion that it seems to challenge the carefully prepared master plan only few years after its coming into operation. To have pleasant environment free from congestion, traffic strangulation and hazardous living conditions, metropolitan cities should not be allowed to grow in a haphazard manner beyond their limits.

## FRINGE GROWTH IN DELHI - A CASE STUDY

Besides being the capital of India, Delhi serves as an active centre of trade and commerce in Northern India. People from various parts of the country flock here in search of employment. Consequently, the rate of growth of population in Delhi has been quite alarming. During the last decade (1951-61), the growth of population in Delhi has been recorded at 64%; it is the highest growth rate witnessed for any metropolitan area in India.\* How Delhi has come to occupy such a position in the whole country is a fascinating question? The analysis of demographic characteristics points out that in the population growth of urban Delhi during the decade (1951-61), natural increase accounted for 38.51% only; increase due to net migration was 33.98% and due to enlargement of urban boundary 27.51%. Fringe growth in Delhi which had been responsible for conversion of rural pockets into urban areas had thus accounted for one-fourth of the increase in the total population of urban Delhi. The total accretion in urban areas in Delhi during the last decade was 30,903 acres (48.26 sq. miles), with a population of 2,53,678 persons. The details are as under:-

Table 1

Increase in Area and Population due to extension of Delhi  
Urban Boundary (1951-61)

| Increase due to                            | Area (Acres)          | Population |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| 1. Urbanized villages                      | 25,632                | 83,593     |
| 2. Regularised Colonies<br>(un-authorised) | 2,242                 | 1,48,224   |
| 3. Approved Colonies                       | 3,029                 | 21,861     |
| Total:                                     | 30,903                | 2,53,678   |
|                                            | or<br>48.26 sq. miles |            |

\*Decadal growth rate during (1951-61) in Greater Bombay was 39%, Madras 22%, Calcutta 8.5% and All India 21.5%.

During the period 1961 to date it has been estimated that increase in the population of Delhi is roughly 1.5 lakhs every year. The bulk of this increase is due to in-migration. The future growth of Delhi and its region was seen in its correct perspective in the Master Plan for Delhi which was approved by the Union Government in 1962. The success of this plan depended on the planned development of Delhi being co-ordinated with the synchronous development of the ring towns. Whereas in Delhi, about 54,000 acres of land was notified and some development has been going on, in the case of ring towns except for the preparation of master plans for Ghaziabad & Faridabad, very little land development has been done. This has mounted the pressure on land in a most undesirable direction. While in Delhi thousands of unauthorised sub-divisions and construction have taken place, in the agricultural green belt in Haryana and U.P., mostly along the highways, fringe growth has come up. Land speculators have sub-divided the land in the most haphazard manner. A number of private colonies have been designed without being approved by the respective States. Since the land has not been fully developed, the supply of drinking water, drainage facility etc., are not available there. Consequently, constructional activity has been on a limited scale. The seeds of future slums and chaotic growth in the green belt in Haryana and U.P., have been sown which only the most drastic measures can now uproot.

Unauthorised colonization on Mathura Road towards Faridabad may be mentioned by way of an example. A number of colonies have sprung up there during the period of last 10 years. These are scattered all over between Delhi boundary and the proposed urbanizable limit of Faridabad. The industrial and residential colonies are inter-mixed with each other. In most, of these colonies, plots have been sold long time ago, but land



has not been developed fully.. In some of the cases, so far only roads have been laid down but no provision has been made for storm water drains, while in some even roads have not been properly laid out. The details of the colonies are given below:-

Details of Unauthorised colonies on Mathura Road

| Sl.No. | Colonies                    | Area covered       |
|--------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1.     | Govind Enclave              | 50 acres           |
| 2.     | Ashoka Enclave              | 250 acres          |
| 3.     | Spring Fields               | 41.5 acres         |
| 4.     | Kailash Enclave             | 25 acres           |
| 5.     | Madhu Enclave               | 24 acres           |
| 6.     | Chandan Gardens             | 21 acres           |
| 7.     | Indraprastha Colony         | 96 acres           |
| 8.     | Lakhi Industrial Estate     | 24 acres           |
| 9.     | Adelphi Industrial Estate   | 71 acres           |
| 10.    | DIF Industrial Estate No.1  | 122 acres          |
| 11.    | DIF Industrial Estate No.II | 30 acres           |
|        |                             | Total: 754.5 acres |

It will be seen from the above table that there are four industrial estates, comprising of 247 acres and seven residential colonies comprising of 507 acres of land. These colonies are not contiguous to each other. The following implications emerge from the above:-

1. It will not be possible to separate out industrial land use from the residential land use; in view of inter-mixing land uses, there cannot be functional inter-relationship in physical planning of this area.
2. The spotty growth near Surajkund has made it difficult to preserve the landscape for National Park, proposed by the Government of India.

3. The provision of public utilities and services would not be economical due to their scattered growth.
4. Work-home relationship and effective transport services cannot be made possible.

A possible solution to the above problem would, of course, be acquisition of land; but keeping in view the cost aspect, it seems doubtful whether the State Government would be in a position to acquire the entire land. According to the estimate of the State Planners, acquisition of land of the eleven colonies would cost about Rs.2.10 crores which is a huge amount and might not be managed out of the State coffers

#### MEASURES TO CONTROL THE FRINGE GROWTH

As pointed out earlier, the fringe communities in metropolitan areas move from the central core and usurp these areas, where there are no controls and land prices are within the reach of these people. Some of the measures that have been undertaken to safeguard against this growth are:-

1. Provision of a green belt around the built up area of the city varying from two to five miles, to be kept basically as an agricultural area.
2. Control of land use around the built up area and around highways by planning legislation as for example Chandigarh Periphery Act and the Punjab Scheduled Roads and Controlled Areas Restriction of Unregulated Development Act.

The above measures have not proved adequate as can be judged from the example already given. It is probable that the pressures on the members of local bodies and planners to relax zoning regulations applicable to green belt area may further result in accelerating the fringe growth. Solutions to this problem will require the following studies:-

- (i) Detailed study of fringe communities in regard to their economic, social and housing needs and their relationship with the mother city.
- (ii) Detailed study of land uses, densities, services, utilities and administrative controls in the fringe areas available

for regulating the growth.

A few possible solutions are, however, suggested below:-

- (i) Planning in a regional frame work.
- (ii) A comprehensive regional land use and zoning policy especially for the core area and the urban fringe.
- (iii) Rural-urban integration of local bodies within the regional set up.
- (iv) Enactment of Comprehensive Town & Country Planning Legislation for the metropolitan region.
- (v) Setting up of a suitable machinery for enforcement of development and implementation of regional plans.